

Managing

Human Capital

Human resource management is defined in Wikipedia as the “strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization’s most valuable asset—the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the business.” Since the human element has been recognized and is seen as valuable, the asset must be managed. Those duties have been assigned to the human resources (HR) manager.

The HR manager usually reports directly to the general manager and is often part of a company’s strategic planning endeavors. Commonly found in corporations with 100 or more employees, the HR manager is responsible for overseeing HR generalists or specialists who conduct the day-to-day activities of hiring, benefits, training, etc., based on specific goals and policies set by upper management, often in partnership with the HR manager.

Previously known as personnel management, human resource management emphasizes the fact that companies are maximizing the use of their human capital. Reflecting that change, a human resource manager’s duties have moved beyond hiring, paying, and discharging employees into the expanded realms of overseeing staffing, performance appraisals, compensation, benefits, training, development, employee and labor relations, safety and health, and human resource research. Several branches of specialization exist among HR managers, such as compensation and benefits managers, and training and development managers. The broadened scope of this job title recognizes workers as complex contributors to a company’s competitive advantage, each bringing to the workplace strengths and weaknesses that directly impact a company’s bottom line.

This multi-dimensional approach to management assumes that the average worker wants to contribute to the success of the enterprise and that the obstacles that stand in the way are lack of knowledge, insufficient training and failure of

processes. Enter the human resources manager who, armed with a plan and a mandate, will help to ensure the “fit” of an employee to a particular job and maybe, a more solid bottom line.

A bachelor’s degree is generally a minimum requirement for these positions and the course of study can be found in the catalogues of a variety of university programs such as business administration, education, organizational development or public administration. Some higher education and an internship or work-study experience may get an entry-level position. Candidates desiring upper management positions will usually need an advanced degree.

On a personal level, a successful human resources manager would, at a minimum, possess clear communication skills, be able to work with or supervise diverse populations, cope with conflicting points of view, function under pressure and demonstrate fair-mindedness.

In Utah, in the foreseeable future, new job openings for these management positions will be dictated by business growth rather than the need for replacements. ①

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Human Resources

Wages in Salt Lake City

Occupation	Hourly Median	Annual Median
*HR Manager, all other	\$39.85	\$82,890
Training and Development Manager	39.18	81,490
Compensation and Benefits Manager	41.83	87,000

Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2007 data.

**Human Resource Managers who are generalists, without specialization within the field*